“We vigorously applaud and cheer that WHO is developing the global action plan on physical activity for 2018 – 2030. We are pleased and honored to provide the consultation below, and look forward to being involved in the further refinement of the plan and most importantly its implementation and realization.”

Submitted by James R. Whitehead, Chief Executive Officer
(email jwhitehead@acsm.org; phone 1.317.637.9200)
on behalf of
○ The American College of Sports Medicine
○ The Exercise is Medicine Global Health Initiative
○ The World’s Largest Network of Scientific, Medical, and Public Health Experts in Physical Activity and Health

A Focus on Overall Strategic Considerations
In our giving input to and reviewing the consultations of many organizations that cite specific sentences and provisions of the draft plan, we are avoiding duplication and are offering thematic and directional consultation as indicated below. We can provide specific citations and references to the draft plan. But at this juncture, considering the large amount of detailing – almost editing – that is being submitted, we have focused on the larger, strategic, and overall aspects of the draft plan.

Our consultative comments are as follows:

- EMPHASIZE FURTHER THE HEALTH AND OTHER CO-BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Physical activity has benefits for health but also complementary benefits for work productivity, potential cost savings, cognitive function and academic achievement, and much more. We would even suggest that this point be included in the title of the plan: WHO global action plan on physical activity and its health and additional benefits 2018 – 2030.
• **FURTHER IMPROVE SURVEILLANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TRENDS:** Doing so in a fashion that is forward-looking and can help inform more effectively what works (and not) with specific settings, populations, cultures, and otherwise.

• **INCREASE THE VALUE AND SUPPORT OF RESEARCH AND ITS TRANSLATION:** “Science to health” should be a higher priority to help provide the evidentiary base to design and model and evaluate all efforts.

• **USE TECHNOLOGY IN A MORE POWERFUL FASHION:** Big data. Wearable devices. Predictive analytics. Machine learning. These are all essential opportunities to transform the effectiveness of strategies and approaches at all levels of society in the promotion of physical activity and gains in health and other benefits.

• **KEEP APPRISED OF THE RATE OF CHANGE, PLANNED AND OTHERWISE:** Because the pace of both progress and its challenges is accelerating, steps need to be taken to enhance and respond to surveillance and other monitoring of physical activity and health over the course of the twelve years of this plan.

• **EMPHASIZE INNOVATION:** Effective systematic innovation regarding physical activity and health needs to be both valued and utilized over the course of the plan.

• **UNDERSCORE ACCESSIBILITY:** Accessibility for persons with disabilities and other abilities must be an elevated priority throughout the plan. Barrier free environments, routes for visually impaired, wheelchair accessibility, intentional accessible routing, and other strategies need to be consistently emphasized.

• **STRESS THE CONNECTION OF HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITY:** The critical connection of healthcare and community resources needs to be additionally underscored, since it offers profound opportunities for advancing physical activity and health.
• **CONCENTRATE ON SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR**: While promoting increased physical activity is the goal, more needs to be included as to strategically addressing the causes of and contributors to sedentary behavior. Focusing on this “other side of the equation” of factors that promote and encourage sedentary behavior is many ways as important as encouraging increased physical activity.

• **EMPHASIZE ABUNDANT CHOICE IN APPROACHES TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**: The wide range of options for physical activity needs to be further emphasized. Moderate physical activity provides health benefits. Walking, for instance, can provide a wide array of health gains, especially depending on pace, elevation, and other variables.

• **PROMOTE THE UNIVERSAL RIGHT TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**: Cities, countries, and regions need to both treat and promote physical activity as a universal right for all people, irrespective of economic status, abilities and disabilities and chronic conditions, employment, or other factors. The underserved should not be left out of the gains through active and healthier lifestyle in preventing, managing, and rehabilitating relevant chronic conditions.

• **PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE “HOW” AND NOT JUST THE “WHAT”**: The draft plan is a powerful call to action for countries, governments, NGOs, and organizations in all sectors. There should be an inclusion in the plan of suggestions and references to resources methods, models, and other practical help on how to implement efforts to increase physical activity.

• **BROADEN THE TARGET AUDIENCES FOR USING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**: Health professionals, organizations, agencies and the sector overall are of central importance, but also vital are transportation, urban design, safety, education, employers, and many more.
• **EXPAND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS, POLICY, AND COMMITTED RESOURCES:** Political leaders at all levels of society should make a firm commitment to specific plans of action to help their constituencies maintain active and healthier lifestyles. Supportive policies and resources can have a powerful, multiplier effect that will be a unique catalyst for progress.

• **IMPROVE AND USE SYSTEMS APPROACHES:** Many efforts at increasing physical activity and health are not created with a systems approach in mind, and become part of well-intentioned efforts that are unconnected and fragmented and often redundant.

• **INCREASE THE USE OF PROVEN ACHIEVEMENT METHODS:** Approaches such as SMART goals, continuous improvement, and other planning and achievement strategies should be encouraged and expanded in the efforts to promote physical activity and health.

• **FURTHER UNDERSCORE KEY OPPORTUNITIES:** This would include:
  - **Healthcare:** Physical activity being addressed in every patient visit with education/counsel and referral to community resources.
  - **Worksite:** Unique opportunities to make the workplace a platform for healthy lifestyles.
  - **Schools:** A powerful mechanism for incorporating physical activity with students and through them with family.
  - **Active Transportation:** Designing for and supporting biking and walking and other forms of human-propelled transportation can be transformative for cities, their populations and health, economies, air quality, and more.
  - **Sports:** One of the most effective means to encourage physical activity in youth and throughout life.